BASIL: More than 150 species; the commonest are large-leaf sweet basil, purple-leaf dark opal basil, small-leaf French basil, curly Italian basil. Lemon, licorice and cinnamon basil are unusual flavored basils.

Uses: Minestrone and vegetable soups, pesto sauce, salad dressing, pasta dishes, omelets, cheese dishes, tomato salads.

BAY LEAF: Also called laurel leaf, from an evergreen tree. The leaves are smooth, waxy, 1 to 3 inches long. Adds a pungent flavor to simmered foods. Do not confuse with or use mountain-laurel leaf, a poisonous bush.

Uses: Herb bouquet, chowders, soups, pot roasts, stews, pickled fish, spaghetti sauces, marinades.

CHIVE: Onion and garlic chives are the two types. Onion chives, commonly called chives, have a mild flavor. Garlic chives have wider, dark-green, grass-like leaves, with a pungent aroma; they are often added to stir-fried dishes.

Uses: Dips, as garnish on soups, chicken and veal dishes, cottage and cream cheese, salads, vegetables.

DILL: The feathery leaves and seeds are used. When dried, the leaves are called dillweed.

Uses: Fresh dill or dillweed in dips, soups, salmon, creamed meatballs, chicken, fish, eggs, cheese spreads. Use the seeds in pickles, breads, dumplings, cabbage, potato salad.

MARJORAM: Also called sweet marjoram; has a fragrant, spicy taste similar to oregano. Leaves are light green, oval shape, ½ to 1 inch long.

Uses: Vegetable juices, oyster stew, clam chowder, pot roasts, stews, stuffings, broiled fish, tomato and eggplant dishes, pasta, zucchini, beans, corn.

MINT: More than 30 varieties; all have a refreshing flavor. Spearmint and peppermint are most widely used, dried or fresh. Apple and orange mints are other varieties.

Uses: Tea, mint juleps, punches, fruit cups, lamb, ham, fruit-salad dressing, fruit compotes, jellies, cookies, candies, sauces.

OREGANO: Strong, aromatic flavor, similar to marjoram. Sometimes called wild marjoram. The Greek variety is the strongest flavored.

Uses: Bean and vegetable soups, minestrone, spaghetti sauces, veal dishes, pasta, herb-cheese spreads, pizza, zucchini and eggplant dishes, taco filling and salsa.

PARSLEY: More than 30 kinds; the commonest are curly parsley and flat-leaf Italian parsley. Leaves have a refreshing taste.

Uses: Food garnish, herb bouquet, poultry and meat dishes, fish and other seafood, cheese and egg dishes, biscuits, herb breads, butters, marinades, most vegetables and salads.

ROSEMARY: Strong-flavored, pine-needlelike leaves grow on evergreen shrubs in warm regions.

Uses: Roast lamb, pork and chicken, veal stews, creamy seafood dishes, cheese sauces, marinades, vinegars, spaghetti and other pasta sauces, baked pasta dishes.

SAGE: More than 500 varieties; the most popular is Dalmatian sage. Garden sage, pineapple sage and variegated sage are grown in home gardens.

Uses: Cheese spreads, pork and poultry dishes, stuffings, stews, sausages, bean and onion dishes. Use pineapple sage for punches, compotes.

TARRAGON: Dark-green, slender leaves have an anise flavor. Sometimes called French tarragon, it's a must in Béarnaise sauce.

Uses: Tomato and vegetable soups, chicken and turkey dishes, broiled fish, vinegars, scrambled eggs or omelets, marinades, vegetables, salad dressing.

THYME: More than 50 varieties; the commonest is English thyme. Leaves are tiny and very aromatic. Citrusy lemon thyme and fragrant nutmeg thyme are other varieties.

Uses: Seafood chowder, meat and poultry dishes, fish, creamed eggs, gumbo, stuffing, herb bouquet, jelly, honey.